

## **Campylobacter**

Last Revised: 09/24/2001

## **Campylobacteriosis**

Last Revised: 10/2001

# **Campylobacteriosis**

Campylobacteriosis is an intestinal illness caused by the bacterium **Campylobacter** of which there are many types.

### **Who gets this disease?**

Anyone can. The illness occurs in all age groups.

### **How is it spread?**

**Campylobacter** is spread by the fecal-oral route. Water, milk or food (especially poorly cooked poultry products) contaminated with **Campylobacter** in their stools may also be a source of infection to people.

### **What are the symptoms?**

Diarrhea (which may be severe and bloody), stomach cramps, vomiting and fever are the usual symptoms.

### **How soon do Symptoms appear?**

The symptoms generally appear between one and seven days, but can be longer.

### **Can a person have this disease without knowing it?**

Yes. Although symptoms usually go away after one to ten days on their own, there may still be germs in the stools for several weeks if treatment is not given.

### **What is the treatment?**

Although antibiotic therapy may not shorten the illness, it does shorten the amount of time the germ is passed in the stools. Therefore, in the child care setting, treatment is recommended for adults and children with **Campylobacter** in their stools. This will reduce the chance of spread to others. Treatment with erythromycin usually gets rid of the germ in two or three days.

## How can the spread of this disease be prevented?

Wash hands thoroughly after using the toilet and diapering children.

1. Wash hands thoroughly before preparing food.
2. Keep children who have diarrhea at home.
3. Make sure children wash their hands after handling pets.
4. Staff with positive stool cultures for **Campylobacter** should not prepare food or feed children.
5. Always treat raw poultry, beef and pork as if they are contaminated and handle accordingly.
  - a. Wrap fresh meats in plastic bags at the market to prevent blood from dripping on other food.
  - b. Refrigerate foods promptly; minimize holding at room temperature.
  - c. Cutting boards and counters used for preparation should be washed immediately after use to prevent cross contamination with other foods.
  - d. Be certain all foods (especially beef and poultry products) are thoroughly cooked.

## Who should be excluded?

Any person with diarrhea shall be excluded from food handling, from childcare agency and from direct care of hospitalized institutionalized patients until the person is no longer having diarrhea.

## Reportable?

Yes, **Campylobacteriosis** is reportable by New Hampshire law.